

270 MILE ZOLA, NOVELIST AND KEFORMER,

marked that he himself had read the book both in Italian and in English, and he refused to send the defendant for trial, as he did not believe that any jury would return a conviction.

This was a rebuff for the fanatics, who now concentrated their energy on the prosecution of Vizetelly. The latter had taken his committal in a defiant spirit, promptly issuing the following notice to his customers: "The trade is informed that there are no legal restrictions on the sale of 'Nana/ 'Piping Hot,' and 'The Soil,' and that none can be imposed until a jury has pronounced adversely against these books which the publishers still continue to supply." This announcement, which was perhaps ill advised — though in counsel's opinion well within one's legal rights — momentarily enraged the "Vigilants," but they were about to receive important help. The Govern-ment, encouraged by the press, took up the prosecution, thus relieving the agitators of the cost of their suit.

Affairs now began to assume a more serious aspect, the question was no longer one of fighting a band of fanatics, but of contending against the law-officers of the Crown who would bring all the weight of their authority to bear upon the jury. In these circumstances

Vizetelly
decided to print a series of extracts from the
works of
English classic authors,¹ by way of showing
that if Zola's
novels were suppressed one ought also to
suppress some
of the greatest works in English literature.
These extracts,
which were preceded by quotations from
Macaulay on the
suggested suppression of the works of
Oongreve, Wycherley,

¹ "Extracts principally from English "Classics," etc., 4to.
London, 1888.
(Printed for private circulation.)